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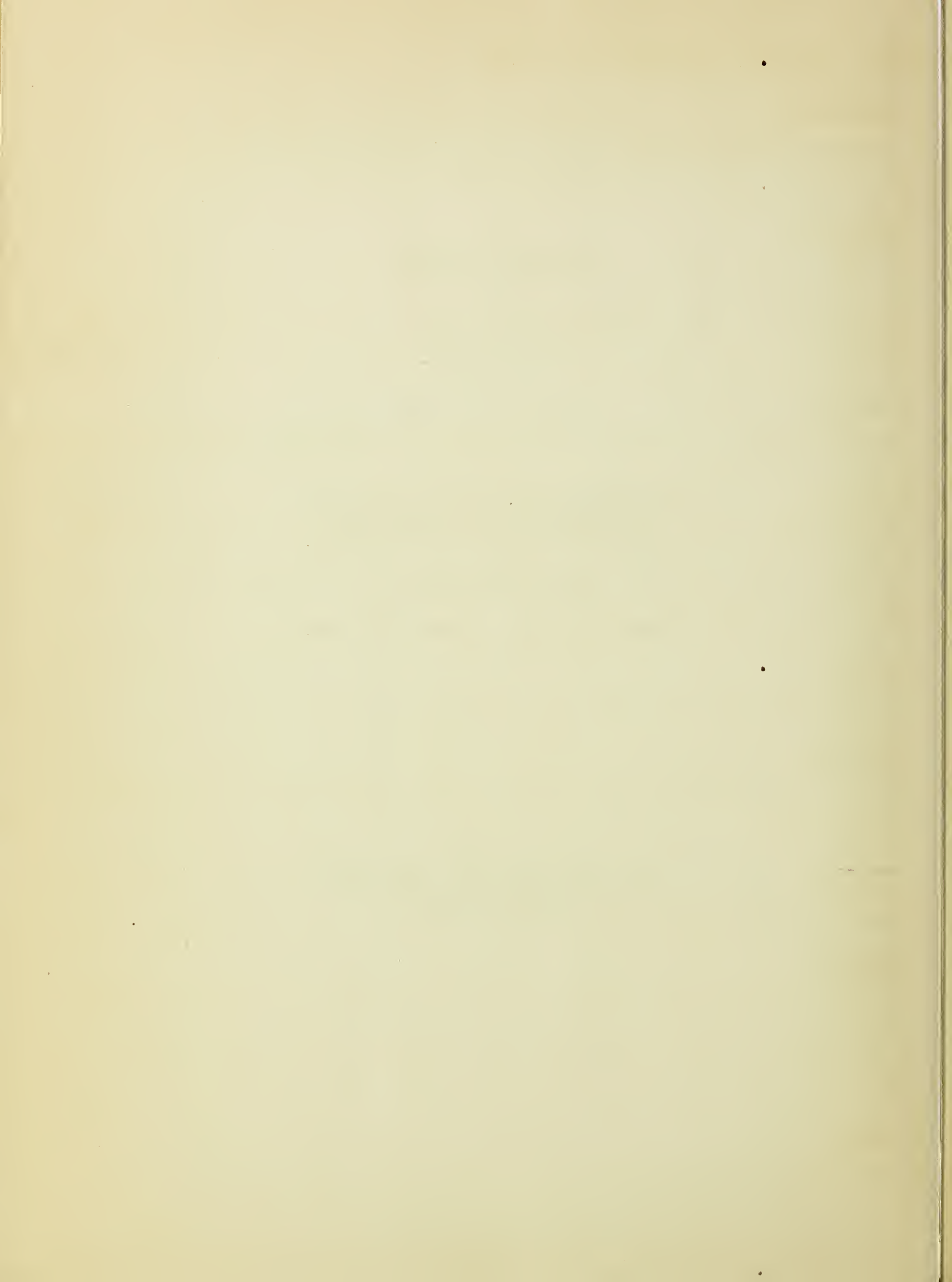
"FOREST FARMING"

Broadcast No. 17 in a series
of discussions of soil con-
servation in the Ohio Valley.

WLW, Cincinnati

Aug. 20, 1938 6 - 6:15 p.m.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
Dayton, Ohio



SOUND: Thunder, followed by rain...

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away!

MUSIC: Fading...

ANNOUNCER

In the southwestern toe of Indiana, on a delta surrounded by a semi-circular range of undulating hills, near the junction of the Wabash and the Ohio, lies New Harmony. Here in 1815 George Rapp founded a communistic colony--a movement which lasted only ten years. Today, the New Harmony cemetery attracts thousands of tourists to Posey County. And this cemetery, bordered by Golden Rain trees, within a stone's throw of the famed Fauntleroy house, gave birth to an interesting story of soil conservation...

SOUND: Door opens and closes.

MORTON

Hello, Dad. Mother said you wanted to see me.

ELLIOTT

Yes, son, I want to have a little talk with you. Sit down over there.

MORTON

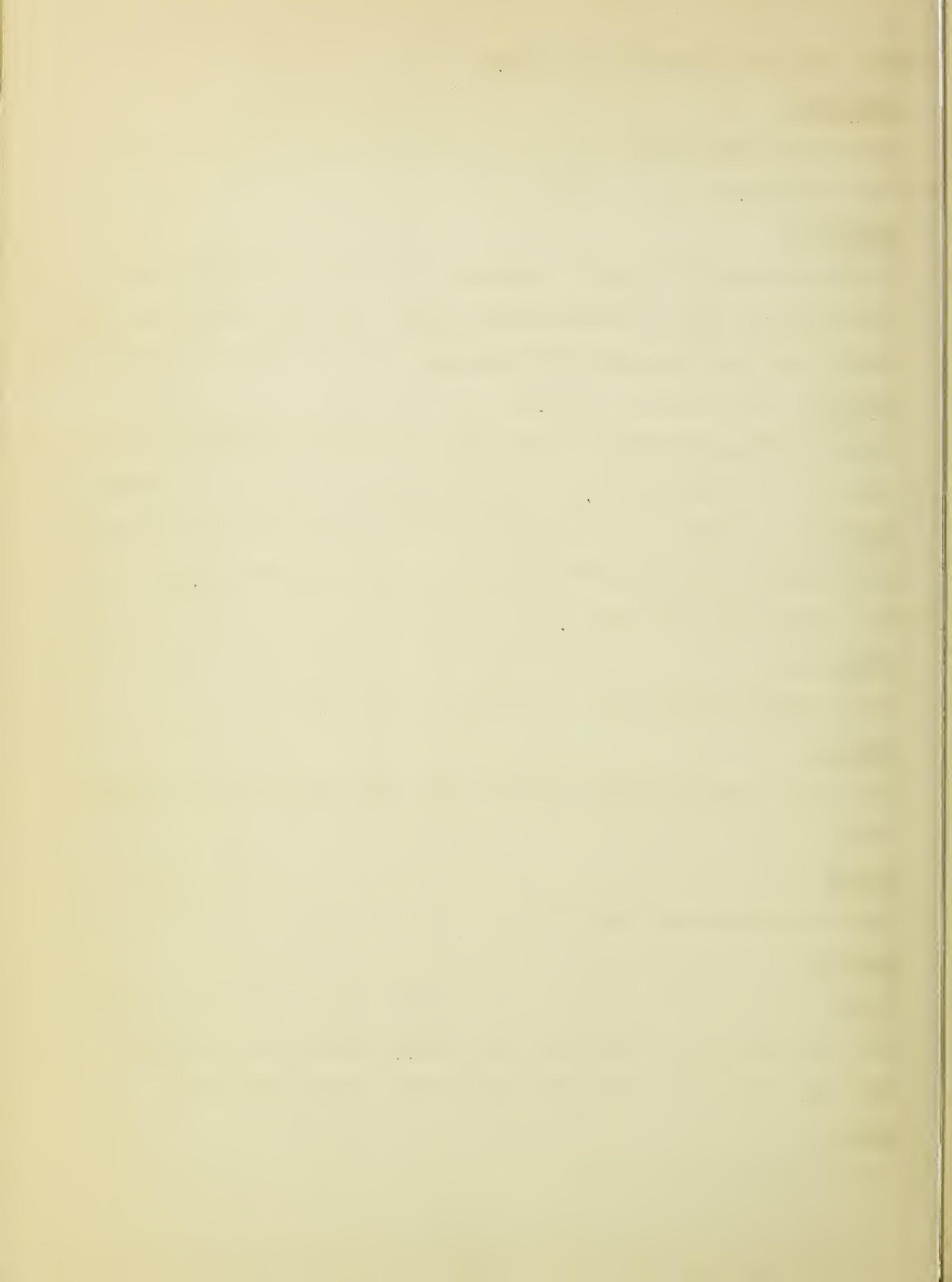
What's on your mind, Dad?

ELLIOTT

I just came back from town. I saw Banker Owen down there, and he was talking to that implement salesman...Johnson, I think his name is. And do you know what they were talking about?

MORTON

Haven't the faintest idea.



ELLIOTT

You. They tell me you've applied for a job with the implement company in Chicago. Is that true?

MORTON

Well, I've been planning to tell you all along. When I took that last load of cattle to Chicago for you, I just asked 'em about a job. I didn't know they'd write back here about it.

ELLIOTT

They did, though. But you don't want to leave the farm, do you, son?

MORTON

I sure don't, Dad. That's why I was thinkin' about getting a job for a little while. I was born on this farm, and I'd like to own it some day. But what chance have I got? Gotta have money to get a start, haven't I?

ELLIOTT

Of course, you have, Morton. You know, your brothers and sisters are all married, and I'm sorta looking to you to keep the farm going. That means that some day you'll have to buy the others out. I'll tell you what, Morton: there's a lot of waste land here on the farm that can be put to work.

MORTON

You mean those bluffs and steep slopes in between the fields? They won't grow anything. Why, they'd wash away the minute you tried to plow 'em.



ELLIOTT

Yes, but you don't have to plow 'em. My idea is to put 'em in trees. They'll grow fence posts, and you can always sell fence posts. Now, there's a lot of locust trees over in the Rappite cemetery. You go over there and get some of those sprouts and plant them on those irregular spots here on the farm. There's the way you can get a start toward buying this farm. Black locust trees will go to work for you...

MUSIC: Fading...

SOUND: Whacking of bushes with scythe, grubbing of weeds with hoe.

SAVAGE

What do you think, Morton: that ought to be all right.

MORTON

Yes, I guess so, Arthur. I'll get the sprouts while you start to work with that grub hoe.

SAVAGE

I'm all set. Ready for the first one?

MORTON

Yeah, go ahead.

SOUND: Plunging of grub hoe into soil.

MORTON

That's big enough. Now, we'll put the sprout in...about that far, don't you think?

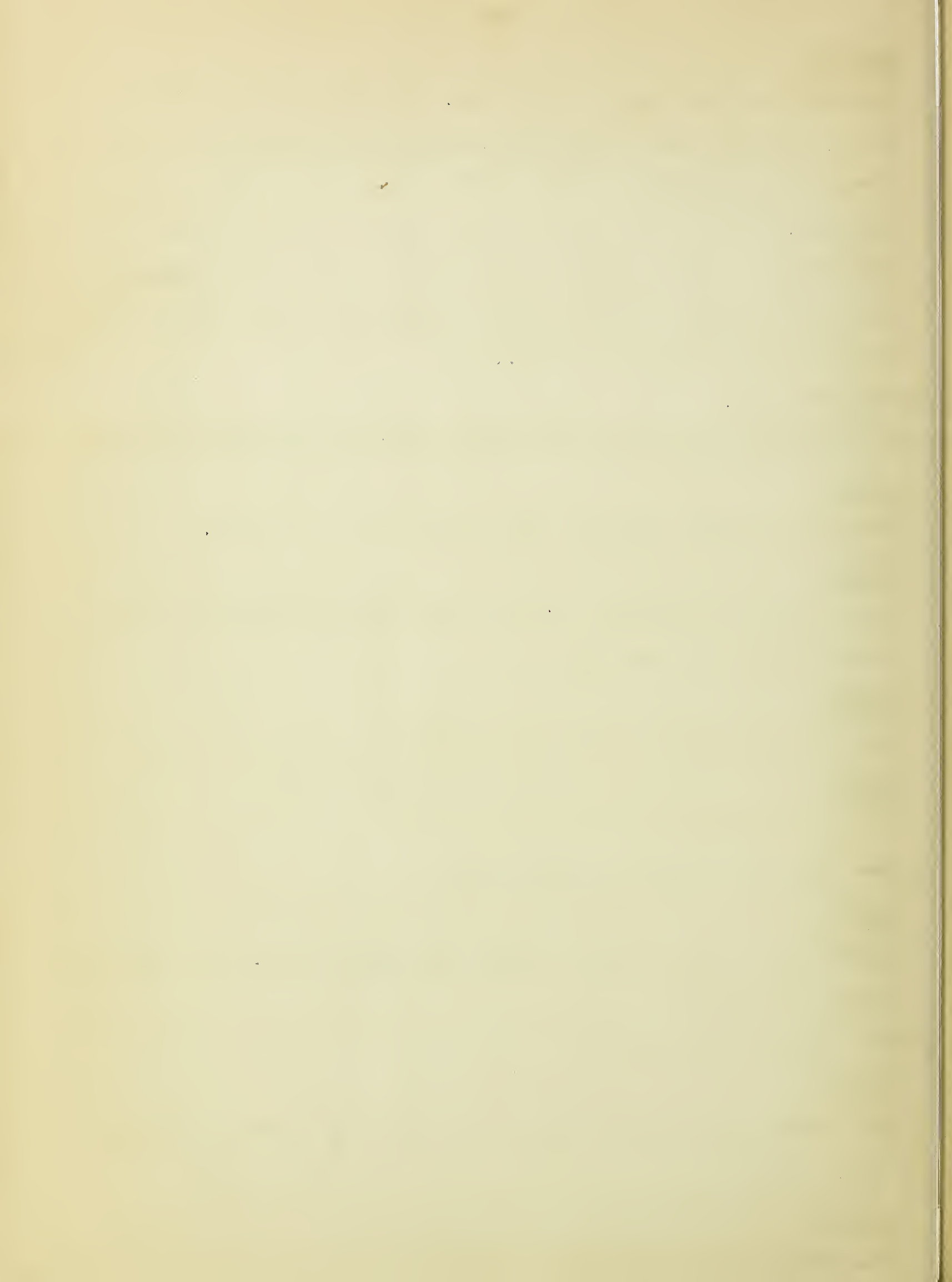
SOUND: Wagon driving up.

SAVAGE

That looks about right. Here, tamp ~~that~~ dirt around it pretty firm.

SAVAGE

Oh, there's Oscar Richards.



RICHARDS

Whoa, now. Hold up.

MORTON

Hello, Mr. Richards. See you've got a load of logs for market.

RICHARDS

Yes, a few oak logs. But what in tarnation are you two fellows doing? Looks like you're planting trees yourself.

MORTON

That's right, Mr. Richards. Black locust. Guess we'll grow a crop of fence posts.

RICHARDS (Laughing)

Why, Morton, you're barking up the wrong tree. Some joke, isn't it, barking up the wrong tree. Why, black locust trees won't do you no good.

MORTON

Dad says they will. He says they make good fence posts, because they grow on places like this bluff that won't grow anything else, and they last a long time, too.

SAVAGE

Yeah, how about that fence post down the road, there?

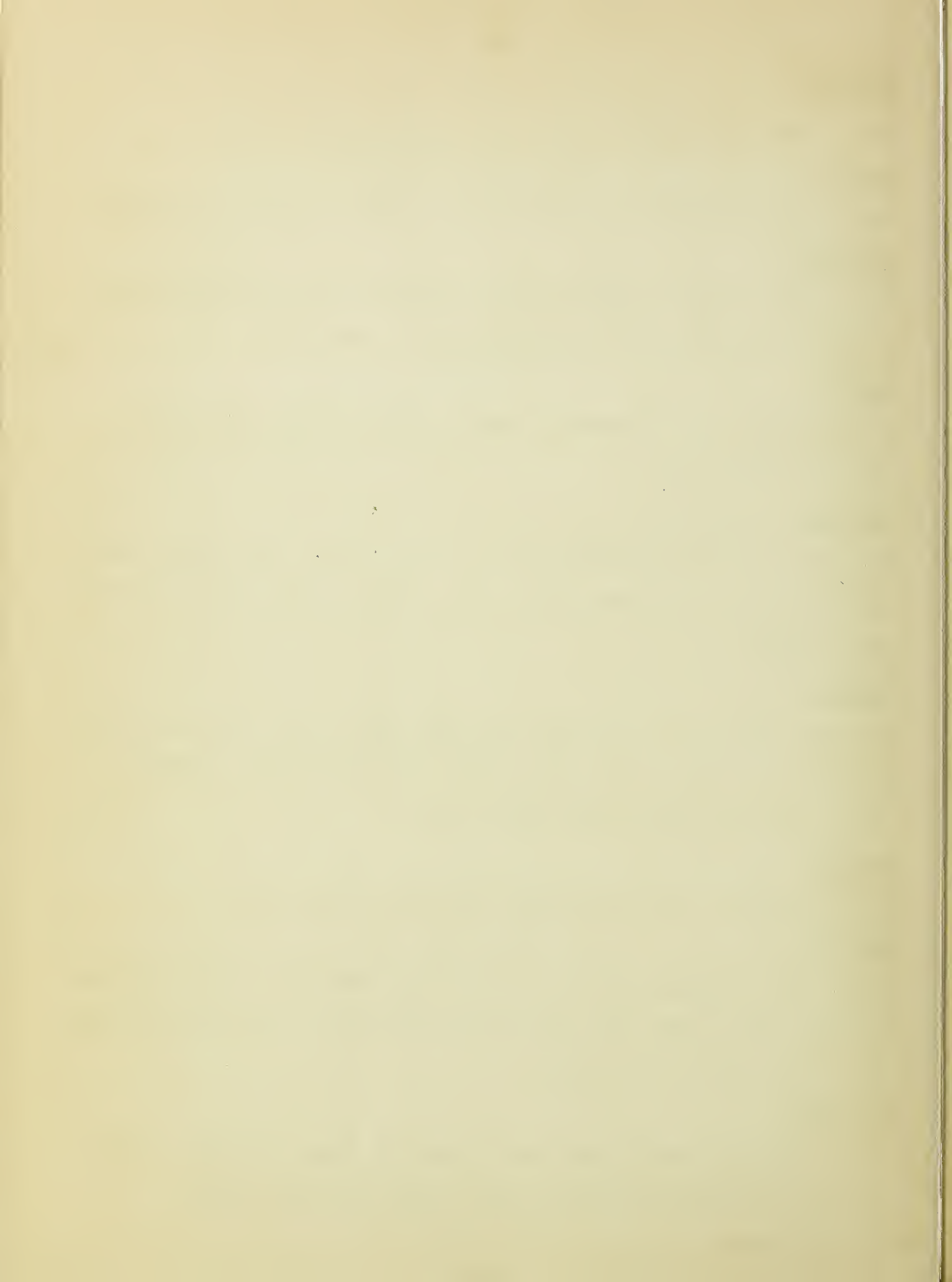
MORTON

Sure. Mr. Richards, you know that fence post down there by that sycamore tree, just this side of New Harmony? Dad says it's been there more than fifty years.

RICHARDS

I know, but you can't grow fence posts so easy. Morton, you'll be dead and buried before you get a post off that bluff.

MUSIC: Fading...



ANNOUNCER

But Mr. Richards underestimated the hardness of the black locust tree. Young Morton Elliott managed his woodlands carefully, fencing off the bluff to exclude grazing livestock. He planted other rough areas, areas too steep for profitable cultivation. The plantations prospered, and in 1923...

SOUND: Horses pulling two wagons.

MORTON

Hello, Mr. Richards!

RICHARDS

Good afternoon, Morton. I hear you sold your first crop of posts. Guess I must o' been wrong 'bout 'em.

MORTON

Guess so. Yes, I graded them and sold them in three grades. Got 15¢ to 35¢ a piece for the 7-foot posts. And do you know how much I got?

RICHARDS

Well, let's see. That place you cut them off of was about an eighth of an acre, wasn't it?

MORTON

Pretty close to it. I figured it all up. You see, I only cut the mature trees, so I've got a crop of posts coming on each year. And I figure that an acre of black locust trees will bring me \$1,100. That's figuring about a thousand trees to the acre. You can't get that much for an acre of corn or wheat, can you?

RICHARDS

Eleven hundred dollars to the acre! Even in these high-priced times, Morton, that's doing plenty good. No wonder you're sold on black locust trees...



MUSIC: Fading...

ANNOUNCER

Thus Morton T. Elliott, a Posey County, Indiana farmer, started a soil conservation plan that netted a tidy cash income. Steep breaks and gullies on his farm today are covered with black locusts. In addition to controlling erosion, his plantations bring him an annual cash income, provide cover for game, serve as windbreaks, and beautify his farm.

MUSIC: Fading...

ANNOUNCER

And now, we turn to the Soil Conservation Service regional office at Dayton, and to your weekly spokesman, Ewing Jones.

JONES

And I'm going to turn right back to you, _____, because I want you to read this bulletin, "Forest Farming."

ANNOUNCER

Now, wait a minute, Ewing, I can't read a big bulletin like that in just a few minutes.

JONES

I didn't mean now, _____, although I do wish you'd thumb through it. This bulletin was prepared by the United States Forest Service. I think it fits in quite well with the amazing record Morton Elliott made on his rough land. Now, if you'll just look over here at the very start of the bulletin,... read that, won't you?



ANNOUNCER

All right. "When the modern farmer talks of crops, he includes his timber crop. His farm woods yield him cash income. Trees grow on the less fertile soils not needed for other agricultural uses. While growing, they require no fertilizer or cultivation. The sale of their products tides the farmer over lean years. He looks to his timber crop for profit."

JONES

That's the whole thing in a nutshell. Timber is a farm crop. It can be made a paying farm crop. That's what Morton Elliott did.

ANNOUNCER

Then this bulletin, "Forest Farming," ought to be of interest to farmers here in the Ohio Valley.

JONES

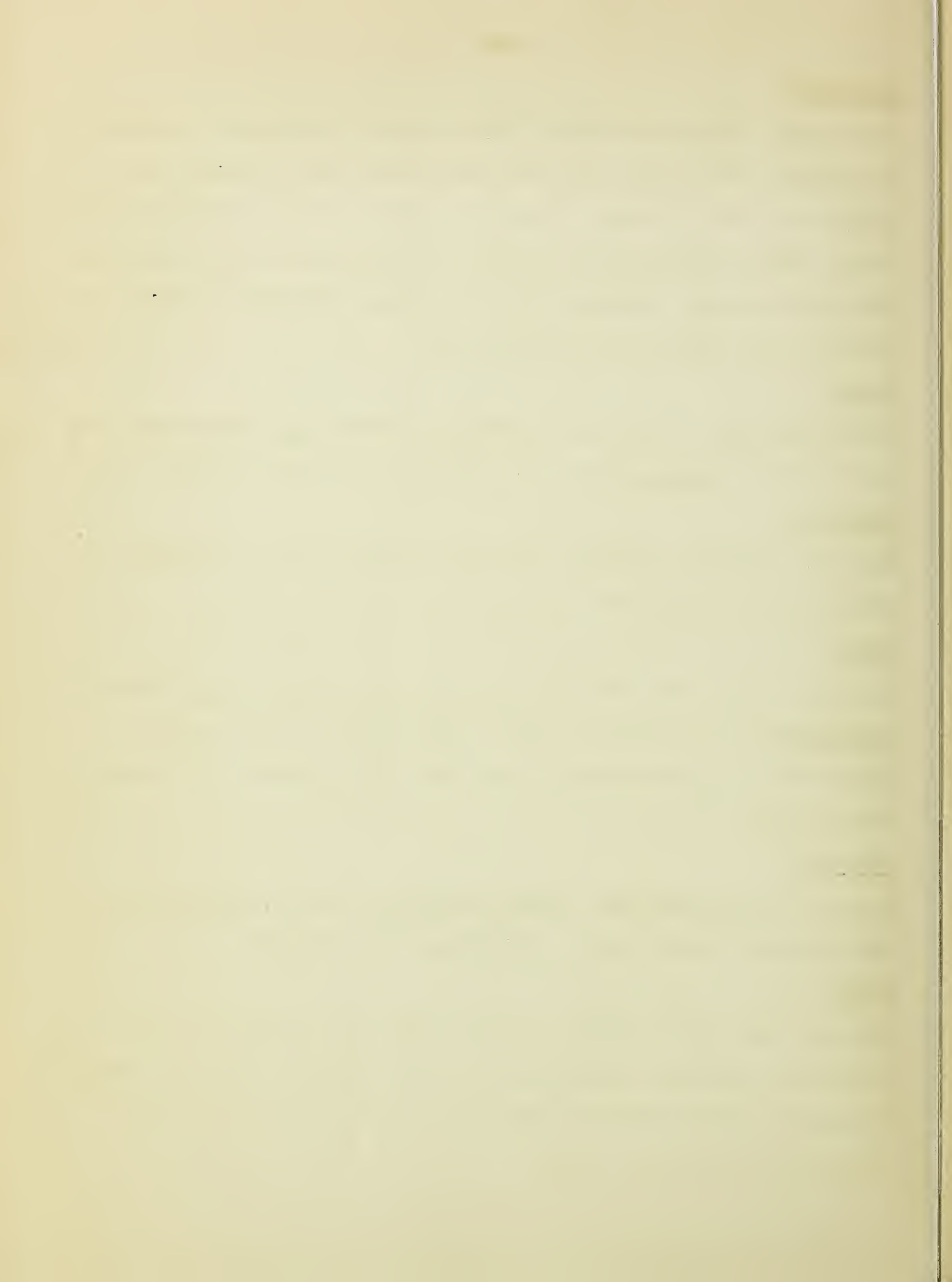
Not just in the Ohio Valley, _____, farmers everywhere. And as far as that's concerned, I think anyone interested in conservation of our natural resources would enjoy reading it.

ANNOUNCER

Copies of this bulletin, "Forest Farming," can be obtained by writing Soil Conservation, at Dayton, Ohio. Right?

JONES

I'm sure the Forest Service would be glad to supply copies to interested parties. Certainly the Forest Service has done a lot to make the United States woods conscious, so to speak. I'll collect the requests, so...



ANNOUNCER

If you want a copy of "Forest Farming," write to Soil Conservation, at Dayton. Now, Ewing, you seem to have an impatient guest.

JONES

Two of them, as a matter of fact, but we'll take them one at a time. Here is J. A. Gibbs, the regional forester for the Soil Conservation Service. Mr. Gibbs has been in forestry long enough to be, well, almost a zealot on the subject of trees. He has had wide experience in the use of trees for conserving soil on steep and erodible slopes, and...

GIBBS

Now, hold on there, Ewing. I don't know about that "zealot" business, but if it's information you want, I'll be glad to talk about Robinia Pseudo-Acacia, or...

JONES

...or...will you please repeat that?

GIBBS

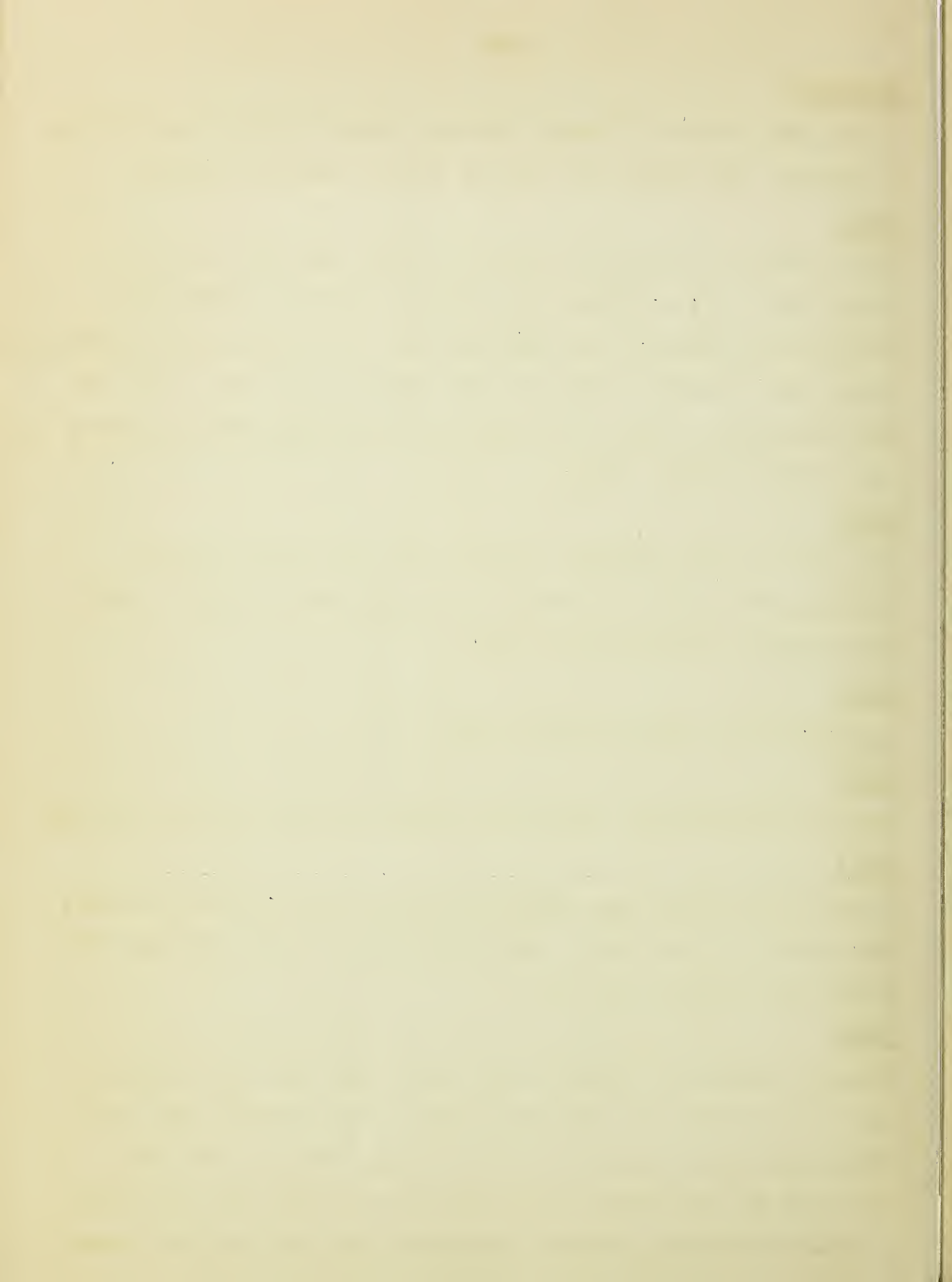
Robinia Pseudo-Acacia. That's the technical name for black locust.

JONES

I think we'd better just quietly drop the subject. But seriously, Joe, you're an authority on this business of forest farming. What do you have to say about it?

GIBBS

Ewing, I think most farmers would rather hear what other farmers have to say about it. Like the farmer in Pennsylvania, who said "farm your woods as you do a crop of corn. Take out the weed trees and the unhealthy and crippled ones and give the best trees a chance to develop. Cut the good trees only when they are ripe."



JONES

That sounds like good advice. And how about that Ohio farmer you told me about?

GIBBS

Oh, yes. He said: "Money from the sale of timber has helped to pay for the farm, take care of taxes, and assist in giving the children a good education, and in addition has furnished lumber, posts, and fuel for the farm." Then there was the farmer from North Carolina, who considers the woods as his bank. He keeps going to it and getting money, and each time the money keeps right on coming back.

JONES

That's the interesting part about managing a farm woods. If fire and livestock are kept out, and selective cutting is used, the new trees keep coming on year after year.

GIBBS

Morton Elliott found that out. I was down on his farm not so long ago, and I had quite a chat with him. He told me that some of his black locust trees he planted in 1931 are now about 6 inches in diameter. That means that the trees he planted in 1931 will be ready for harvest in three or four more years...not bad.

JONES

Not bad? That's excellent. I remember reading about a farmer in Weakley County, Tennessee, who grew a crop of fence posts in seven years. But getting back to Mr. Elliott, just what have his trees brought him?



GIBBS

I don't know the whole story, Ewing. Anyway, you can't measure his savings entirely in dollars and cents. Don't forget he's also saved a lot of soil. Lots of his odd corners would have washed away and been completely worthless if he hadn't planted trees. But I do know about one of his locust groves. He planted about 8 acres in 1904. Counting the cost of clearing, buying seedlings, freight, and labor for planting, this 8-acre grove cost him \$127.92. By 1936, he had around 3,000 trees, worth \$1.50 a tree.

JONES

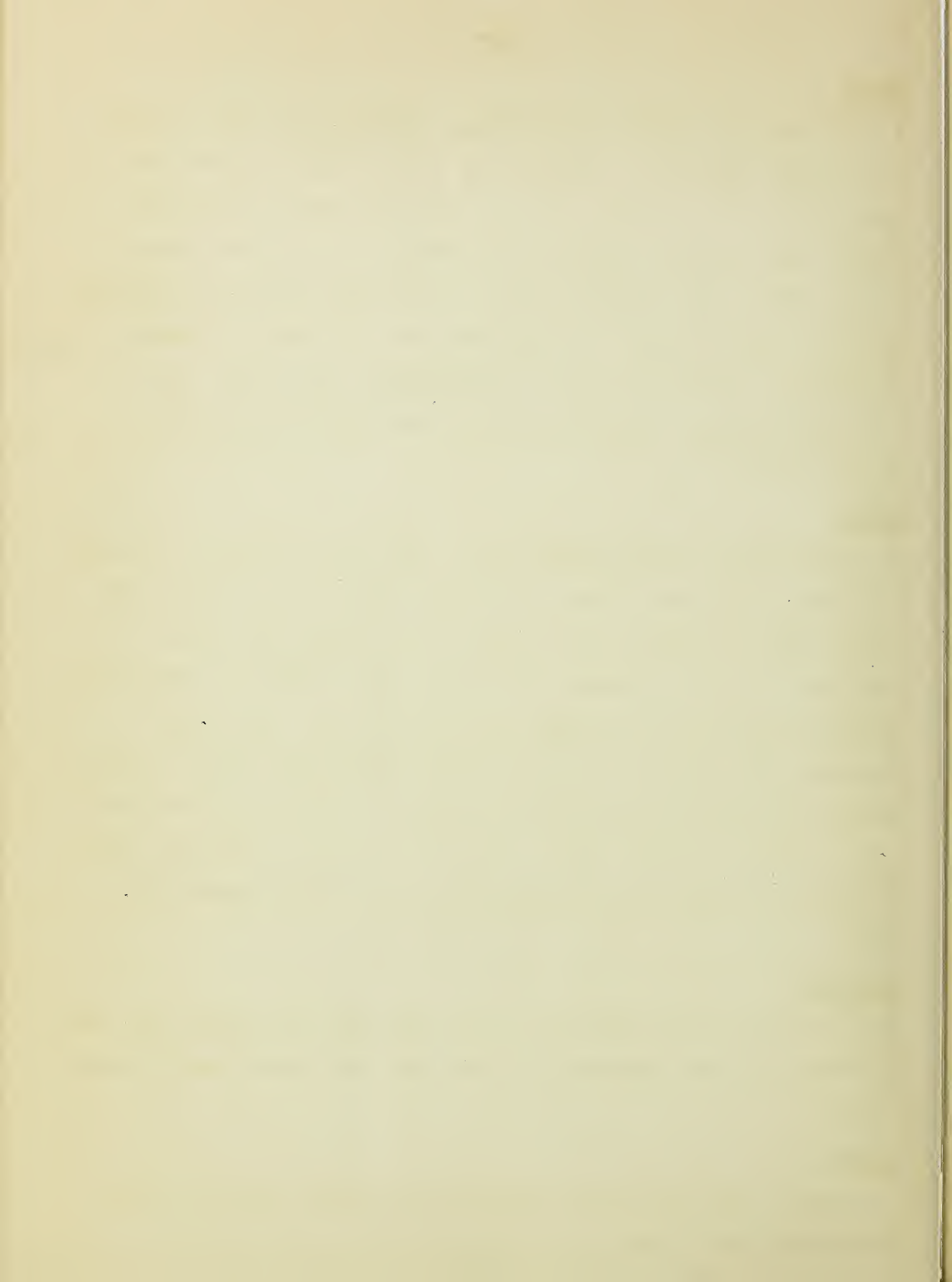
In other words, around \$4,500 from a clay hill worthless for cultivation. Well, Joe Gibbs, I certainly thank you for your comments, and I'd like to have you go a bit further into this business of forest farming. But since Hap Heathman is here, too, perhaps we'd better hear his side of the story. Mr. H. R. Heathman, who cringes if you call him anything but "Hap," is the project forester at the Soil Conservation Service demonstration area in Butler County, Ohio. He's seen service in Indiana, too, I believe, so let's get the benefit of his varied experience. Hap?

HEATHMAN

Well, Ewing, I won't pull any fancy names like Joe Gibbs did. But my work down near Hamilton is a lot like the farmer's--it's never done.

JONES

I think, in all sincerity, you'd better qualify that, or you'll be looking for a job.



HEATHMAN

You misunderstood me. I mean that more and more farmers are beginning to realize they have a gold mine in their woodlands. That's why so many farmers in the Indian Creek project are putting their steep and eroded lands back to timber. But, I'll repeat my first statement, the farmer's work is never done. There are times, though, when other farm work is less pressing. That's the time he can give to his farm woods. There's the old saying, "winter time is woods time."

JONES

That's an old saying, I know, but it still holds true. But, Hap, not everyone knows that a protected farm woods is nature's best protection against soil erosion. Let's explain that "protected" part.

HEATHMAN

A protected farm woods means one that is protected from fire and livestock. Fire, fortunately, is not ordinarily a serious problem in the farm woods, but still some farmers burn over their woods. Injury by livestock is quite serious. I remember at the Purdue University exhibit at the Indiana State Fair last year, one fellow was quite surprised at the suggestion that livestock be kept out of the woods.

JONES

I hope you had an answer for him.



HEATHMAN

I certainly did, Ewing, and here it is. Animals turned into the farm woods for unrestricted grazing may do considerable damage. They tramp down, root up, and eat the young seedlings needed to produce the forest of the future. Their sharp hoofs may bruise tender roots, permitting fungus diseases which cause death or decay to enter the trees. I think that's all I said, but he knows now that livestock should be kept out of farm woodlands.

JONES

I'm sure he does, and thanks to you, Hap Heathman. You know your forestry, like the county agricultural agent who said...

COUNTY AGENT

Forestry increases farm income by making waste lands yield a profit by growing timber on poor soils, steep slopes, rocky lands, wet lands, unused corners, eroded lands...

FARMER

Say, you seem to know what you're talking about.

COUNTY AGENT

I do. And I know your problem, Terry, and I'm coming out to see you soon. But, in the meantime, you take this bulletin along.

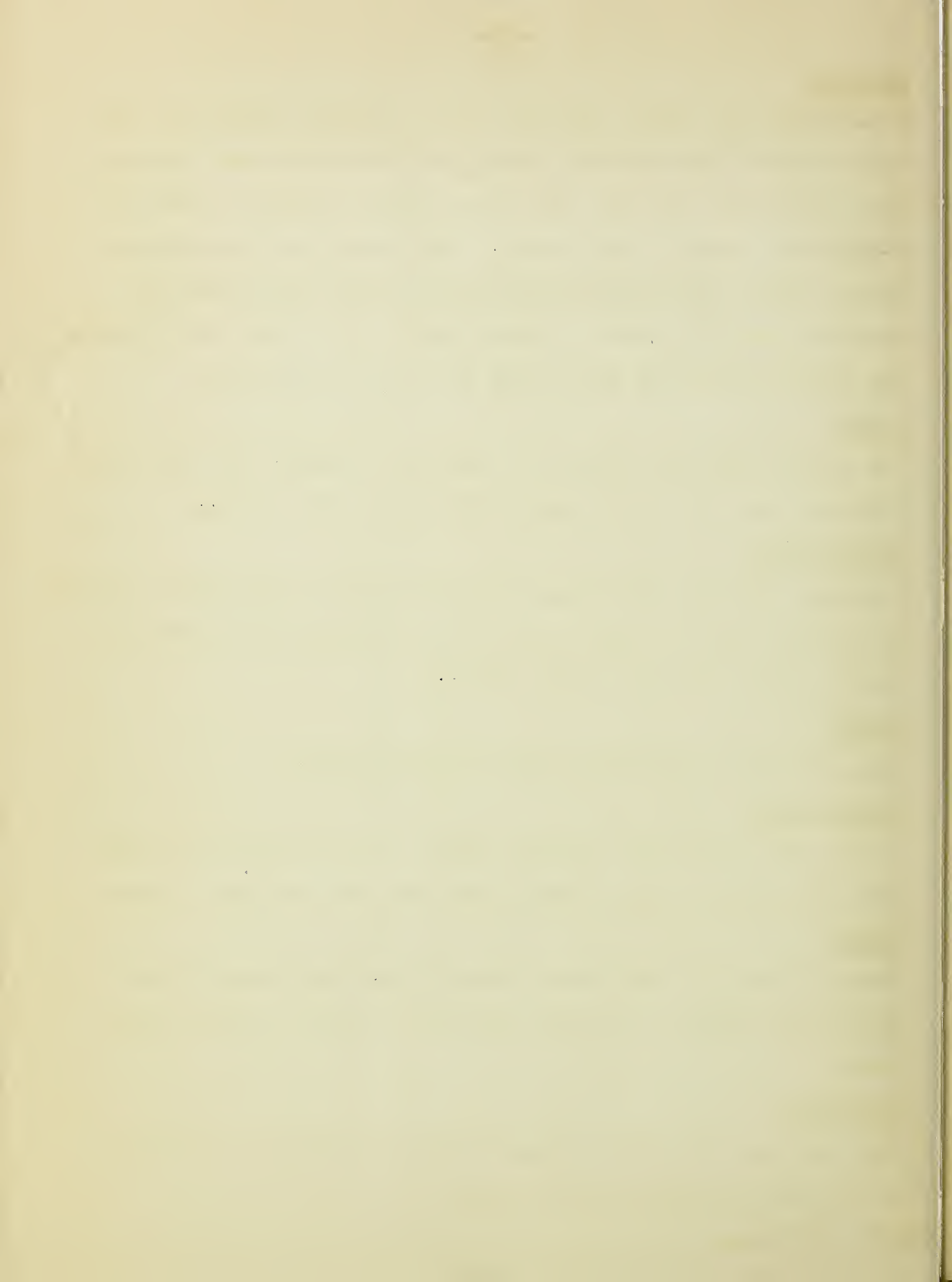
FARMER

"Forest Farming." That looks interesting. You know, I think Joe Griffin ought to see this bulletin. Joe has a hilly farm, and...

ANNOUNCER

Joe, and you, can get the bulletin "Forest Farming," by writing to Soil Conservation, Dayton, Ohio.

MUSIC: Fading...



ANNOUNCER

Next week...Saving Raindrops for Summertime...

SOUND: Thunder, followed by rain...

ANNOUNCER

This is an educational presentation of the Nation's Station.

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